

Seen From

My Seeder Step



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*by Hugh Duddridge*

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Seen From  
My Seeder Step

*A Volunteer Crop of Verse from  
a Saskatchewan Farm*

by  
HUGH DUDDRIDGE

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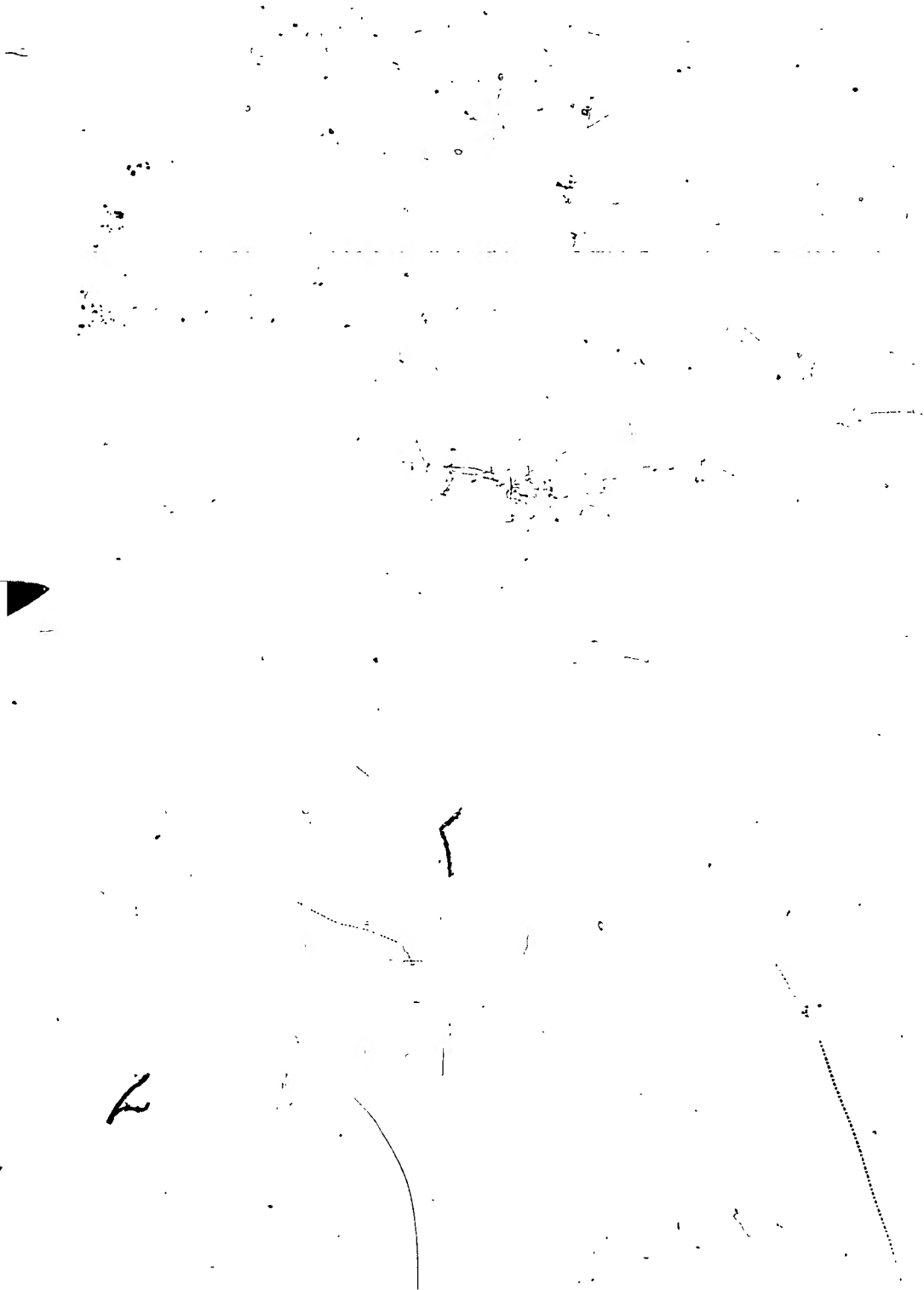
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HUGH DUDDRIDGE  
327 West Fourteenth Street  
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan - Canada

NOVEMBER, 1950

6.

SEEN FROM MY SEEDER STEP



Dedicated to  
HELEN JESSIMAN  
(My Lady Inquisitor)

A faithful critic  
An inspiring mentor  
A kind friend



## FOREWORD

The Vancouver Poetry Society, of which Hugh Duddridge has long been a member, always looks forward to seeing one of his poems in 'FULL TIDE' their magazine of poetry. Recently, as Editor of 'FULL TIDE', I chided Mr. Duddridge for having neglected to appear in a current issue... This volume of verse is his reply. We asked for a drop of water, and he offers a cup, abrim and overflowing with refreshing goodness!

Wherever poetry is, there Hugh Duddridge's mind and heart are engaged. He is an active member and Past President of the Saskatchewan Poetry Society, Regina, Sask.

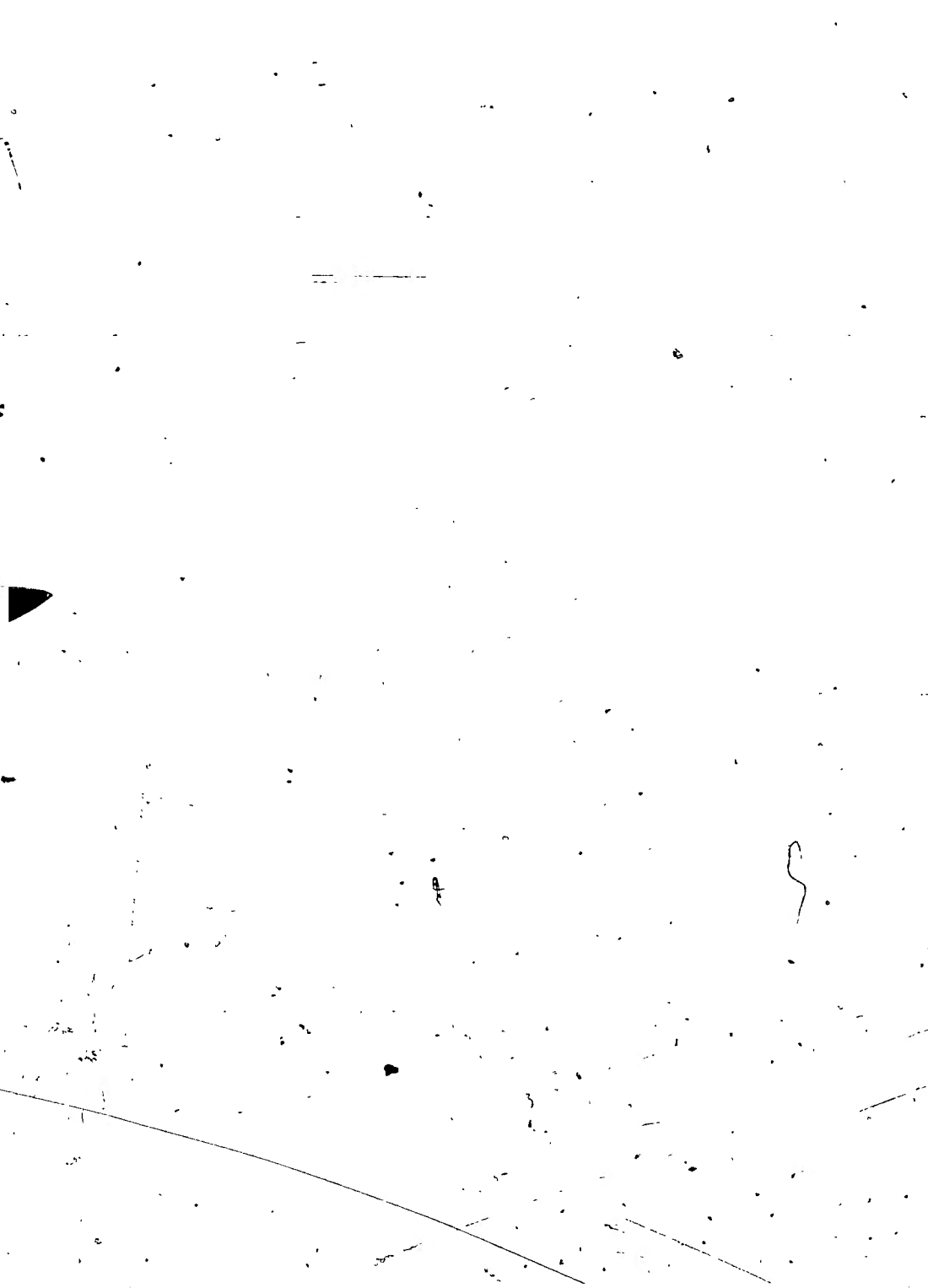
Although this volume is only a small portion of his writing, Mr. Duddridge claims to be a student and lover of poetry rather than a poet. Yet the reader is caught instantly by the lure of his unaffected and sincere love of nature, manifest through all his writing. The very simplicity of his language is gentle poetry, and one is tempted continually to further reading, as, with unobtrusive art, the variations in rhythm are kept true to the moods, robust or tender, expressed in each verse.

The selection of poems in the present volume range from those of his homeland in England, where he was born in 1872 "under the shadow of the Quantock Hills" - to poems of his loved Canadian prairie land, where he has lived during the past fifty years. Sometimes his poems strike a resonant personal note. Many give forth philosophies that are rich and sure. The section entitled 'SOME WILDS OATS' is characteristic of the author's warm humanitarian outlook. His gay humor, broadly depicted there, runs like a silk thread throughout his work.

In these poems Hugh Duddridge lifts for a moment the grey curtains of our daily monotones, and when they fall about us again, they gleam with the untarnished silver of his bright imagery.

Bertha Wheeler,  
Editor 'FULL TIDE'  
Vancouver Poetry Society

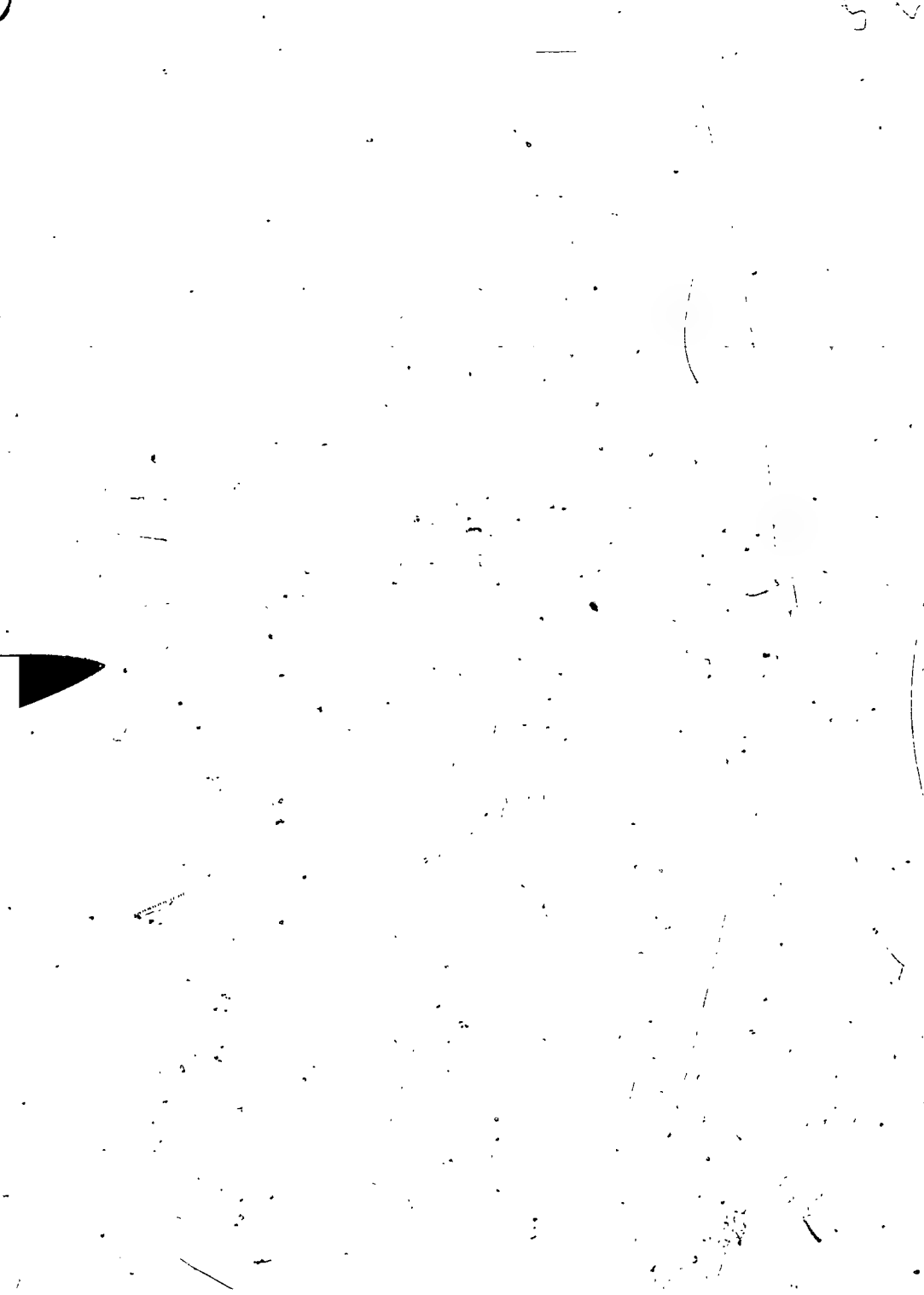




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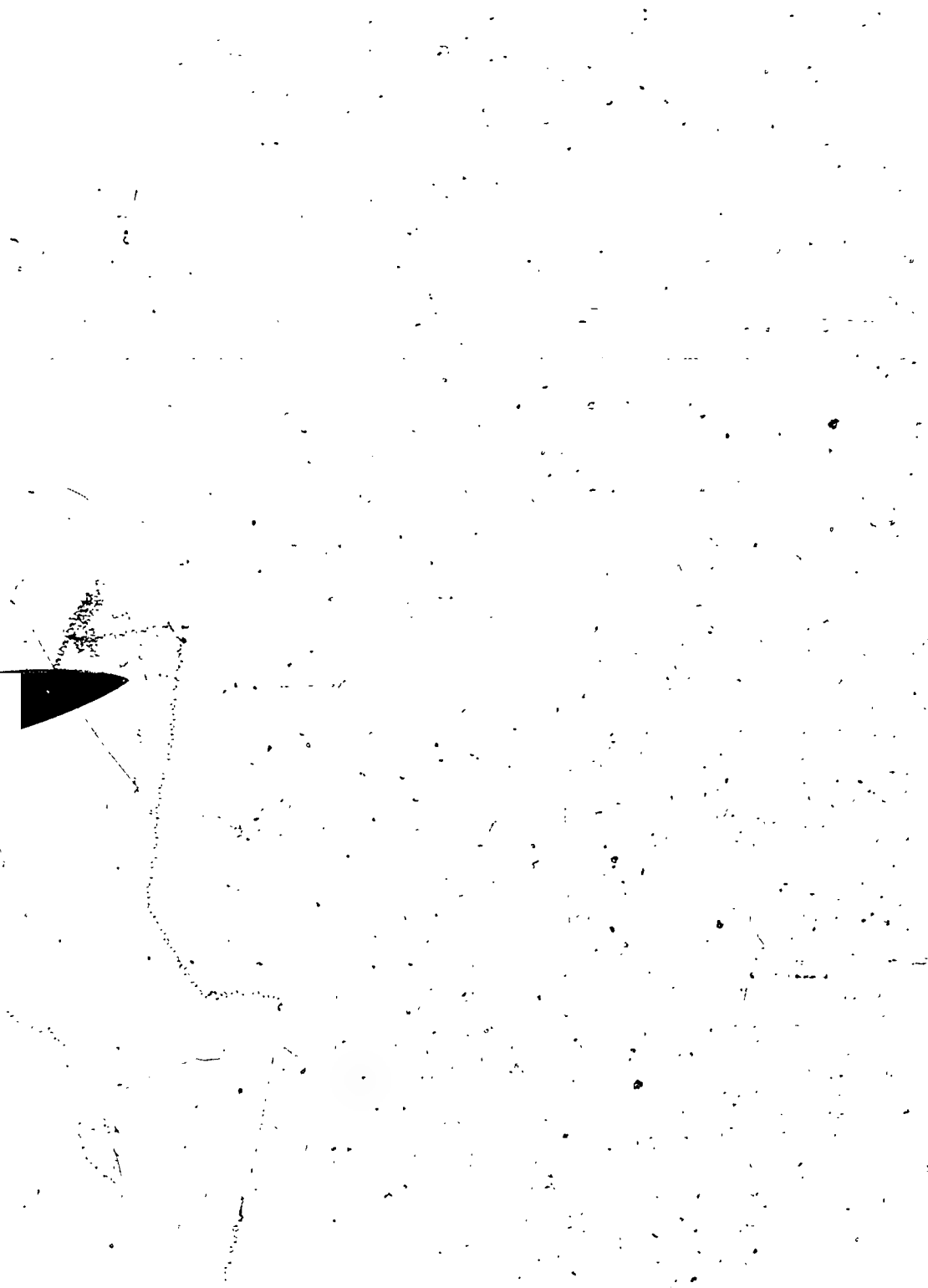


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SECTION I

SEEN FROM MY SEEDER STEP

SEEN FROM MY SEEDER STEP

The long straight line of the wheel-mark,  
The clink of the trailing chain,  
And below me I see the ripple  
Of streamlets of dropping grain.

The radiant air is a-tremble  
In a pulsing, shimmering haze,  
To the wooing of the Sun-god  
And the fervour of his gaze.

Glad and green is the poplar  
In his new-made leafy suit,  
And the garden cragana  
Is showing a tender shoot.

A slender dust-cloud spiral  
Flies dancing with skirts afloat,  
In the arms of the frolic whirlwind,  
To the pipe of the wildbird's note.

Black and moist is the fallow  
From the seeder's churning disk,  
With its vision of wheat in the yellow  
Rewarding the sower's risk.

Thought and Labour; Labour and Thought;  
And ever the two must wed;  
For labour alone is ox-like,  
And thought, unexpressed, is dead.

All we are engaged in the planning  
With Him who planneth the whole,  
Nor know we aught that is greater  
Than the ultimate human soul;

That lives and expands in the All-love,  
Awaiting a glorious birth,  
As the flower in the seed is hidden,  
Close-lapt by the fostering earth.

And we who are joined with the Planner  
In building that human soul  
Are forms of the Spirit Eternal -  
A part expressing the whole.

I stand at my post of vantage,  
And this is the thing I see:  
That men are but gods in the making,  
And God is the man to be.

### FROST IN EARLY AUGUST

The black frost's blight  
In the silent night,  
With the searing scorch  
Of his icy torch,  
Leaves a mortal stain  
On the milky grain.

The virus of death  
In his killing breath  
Descends on the bower  
Of the sleeping flower,  
Ne'er again to wake  
At the new-day break.

And the lusty vines,  
In deep serried lines,  
That but yestere'en  
(A vision of green)  
Stood in the full tide  
Of their summer pride,

Lie blackened and bare  
In the mocking glare  
Of the morning sun;  
For the deed is done:  
The untimely doom  
Of the season's bloom.



## THE BROWN BIRDS

Air flocks of God's children,  
I know not your name;  
Close kin to the snow-birds,  
Or are you the same?

So you in your brown suits,  
As they in their white,  
Stream loose o'er the prairie  
In swift dipping flight;

Then sudden you vanish  
Among the brown clods,  
As over the fallow  
My seeder team plods.

A gleam of brief silver,  
A downward deflect,  
And not a brown feather  
The eye can detect.

Save where in the drill-marks  
Slight stirrings are shown,  
As if the brown ridges  
Were animate grown.

My seeder advances,  
And lo! you are gone,  
In scuds of brown cloud-rack,  
A thousand as one.

What instinct directs you  
In camping and flight?  
What signal is given  
To rise or alight?

And as your brown squadrons  
Wide wheel and deploy,  
What sympathy makes you  
A vision of joy?

I am opening up the furrow on the straight half-mile.

In a bee-line for the post by yonder cow;  
With the jingle of the harness making music all  
the while,

As I sit upon the old gang plow.

She is running free and fine and cleaning like a  
charm,

And laying off the furrows row by row;  
Who wouldn't be a farmer a-working on a farm  
When he's sitting on the old gang plow!

The gallant brutes are stepping, my partners and  
my pride;

There's York and Queen and Sandy, Duke and Chow;  
Their muffled hoof-beats thudding in a rhythm as I  
ride

Like a monarch on the old gang plow.

I can glimpse the waters gleaming behind the  
willow bush,

And the jolly blackbirds chattering on the bough,  
As I while away the moments of the big spring rush,  
Sitting sideways on the old gang plow.

As the liner on the ocean, so my craft upon the land  
Cuts a passage with its armoured coulter-prow,  
And the land-gulls follow screaming as I keep  
a wary hand

On the tiller of the old gang plow.

There's a mystery in the sky, there is music all  
around,

There's a magic in the air that charms me now,  
As it shimmers o'er the surface of the frost-  
delivered ground

While I sit upon the old gang plow.

The slice is crumbling crisply with the rending  
of the share,

Bringing secrets of the ages from below;  
O 'tis good to be alive at the season of the year  
When again I ride my old gang plow!

On the far skyline riding,  
Her yoked horses guiding,  
Across the prairie's rim I see her hie;  
Like Dian in old story,  
When Greece was in her glory,  
And forms of fable peopled earth and sky.

The gulls in circles airy,  
Bright spirits round a fairy,  
Or daylight angels guarding  
And from all danger warding,  
Continuous keep her constant company.  
Revolving, flashing, swimming,  
Or on slow pinion skimming;  
At distance like the spangle  
Of Pleiad's silver tangle,  
Calling the while their piercing-plaintive cry.

As when we see retreating  
A tall ship outward beating,  
Her bows the billows breasting  
Till, sky on ocean resting,  
Only her sunlit topmast sails are seen;  
So here - the team descending  
Beyond the landscape's ending -  
The slant sun, near his setting,  
The maiden silhouetting,  
Add's the last touch of witchery to the scene.

And now from sight she passes  
In the next valley's grasses,  
Yet clear in fancy's view I see her ride;  
The white gulls that had found her  
Attendant still around her,  
As if with her they ever would abide.

## THE BARN SWALLOW

Lissome and lithe,  
Buoyant and blithe,  
Skimming the ground or scaling the height.  
A flash and a swoop,  
And loop of the loop,  
Threading a maze that bewilders my sight.

On the air tides  
Deftly he rides,  
Beats up against or sails with the wind.  
Tireless and free;  
Glad I would be  
Could I his secret of gaiety find.

Now he swings himself to rest  
Near the well beloved nest,  
By his true-mate fondly prest,  
And to his love complains:  
Such a sweet inviting song,  
Such a tender-plighting song,  
Such a dear delighting song,  
Such moving-melting strains.

A low melodious twitter  
That momentarily seems sweeter,  
No music could be meeter  
To give his passion vent.  
His little heart outpouring,  
Each run the last encoring,  
In bursts of soft adoring  
And infinite content.

Then up and aloft  
O'er garden and croft,  
Skimming the ground and soaring above;  
Finding in flight  
Scope for delight  
He scarce could express in that dear Song of  
Love.

'Twas in mid-winter.

Alone in a deep wood at noon I sat  
Upon a pile of logs, the morning's cut,  
Amid a wreck of stump and tangled branch.  
A chill and creeping mist enveloped all  
And circumscribed the prospect to a plot  
Of small dimension. Each minutest twig  
On the still trees encased in crust of rime;  
No sound of voice nor sight of beast or bird;  
And with cessation of the axe's ring  
And crash of tree the silence on me pressed,  
Until it grew a felt and tangible thing,  
Elusive, as remembered sound at night  
- Heard half in dreamland through the open  
lattice -  
Of distant swell of surf on ocean shore,  
Sighing a slow and ceaseless monotone.

A sense of loneliness and desolation,  
Born of the murky day and body's fag,  
On my reflective soul laid its dead weight,  
And the warm precincts of the cheerful home,  
Left in the early morning, seemed remote,  
And fled the joy in ties of blood and kin.  
I was as one marooned on a lost isle  
In a deserted and forgotten sea;  
The very trees dead and forgotten stood,  
Like ghostly spectres looming in the mist,  
Shrouded in their eternal cerements  
Of frosted crystals.

Stubborn questionings rose:  
The Why and Whence and Whither of our lives;  
Those intimations in the heart of man,  
Innate and universal, of a Being,  
Benignant source of Life and Light and Love:  
Were they but blank illusion? Flares of hope  
Lit only to be quenched in nothingness?

The sombre spell was broken; at my feet  
 A hungry little chickadee appeared,  
 With dainty motions pecking at the crumbs  
 That lay upon the snow from my lone lunch;  
 Then, waxing bolder, from a neighbour branch  
 Made sudden dart at a small crust I held,  
 And, frightened by his own temerity,  
 Into the distance with the booty flew;  
 But soon returned, and after many hoverings  
 And shy advances, perched on my stretched arm  
 (I keeping utter stillness all the while)  
 And took his fill with many a thankful cheep,  
 To the last precious morsel in my hand.

Welcome, thrice welcome was my bonny guest!  
 Welcome as early crocus to a child,  
 Or the new babe to happy wedded pair.  
 The red blood coursed my veins and flamed the cheek  
 In flush of thankfulness and pent emotion.  
 I thought of him who glorified the mouse  
 And daisy as he plowed the stubble field;  
 Of Shelly's skylark chanting in the blue;  
 And of the One who said, "Consider the lilies,"  
 And "Not a sparrow falleth to the ground  
 Without the knowledge of the heavenly Father."

The clear-drawn picture of development,  
 Or ordered rule and overlooking care,  
 And ties of kinship linking all creation,  
 - That Nature shows to the observing eye  
 Of her true worshipper - again shone bright;  
 Revealed to me anew by that sweet bird;  
 Companion of an hour, yet still remembered,  
 For oft in other days my thoughts revert  
 To bless the friendly little chickadee.



## THE VOICE OF THE WHEAT

With acknowledgements to Richard Jefferies.

The wheat stood drowsing in the August sun,  
Each head inclined with weight of ripening grain,  
And all the field in golden plenty shone.

Along the road there came a little child,  
Loitering and listening to the merry birds,  
Gathering the wayside flowers (herself a flower)  
And holding converse with the flowers and birds;  
For bird and flower and every breathing thing  
To her young fancy was articulate,  
And many a plot she wove in Fairyland  
In which those friends all played their several  
parts.

To her there came a whisper from the wheat,  
Borne on a breeze that lightly stirred each plant,  
And in reply she said, "Why do you sigh?"  
Then to her spoke the Spirit of the Wheat:  
We sigh, my dear, because today we see  
That in the midst of plenty there is dearth;  
The horse is fed, in work and idleness,  
And bird and bee and rabbit take their fill;  
The wheat men store in bins, and lock the doors,  
Telling the workers, 'Ye produce too much',  
While in the cities men and women want,  
Getting as dole that which is theirs of right,  
And little children such as you, my dear,  
Cry out for bread, and hunger stills their play;  
While in your schools they teach the bad old plan:  
Instead of 'each for all and all for each'  
The lesson is: 'take each whate'er he can.'

The child, not understanding, passed along,  
As on the breeze the spirit sped away.

'Tis the time of the melting of the snows,  
A pleasant day and warm,  
And I sit by the door in the noon-hour break  
On my open-prairie farm.

A faintly tinkling stream runs by  
With tiny eddy and swirl,  
That pauses awhile in a standing pool  
Where the foam-wreaths cream and curl;

Then on again in a swelling flood  
Down a span-wide channel's fret,  
To widen out on the sloping turf  
And be caught in a grassy net.

Stealing and winding between the bents  
That vainly hold it in mesh,  
Till it forms again on the lower flats  
And begins its journey afresh.

Flowing on to the deepening slough,  
Where it joins the sister streams,  
And together they mirror the noon-high sun  
And bask in his dancing beams.

And I minded me of the land of my birth  
On the yellow Severn Sea,  
Where the streams sing on, week in, week out,  
By meadow and greenwood tree.

Where the green ferns bend to the waters clear,  
And the trout leaps in the sun,  
And the moorehen broods on her sedgy nest,  
Close-hid in the shadows dun.

Yet shall I prize, as we do things rare,  
This music that flows by my door;  
And its echo will chime in the sultry time  
When the streams are running no more.



Lines on first observing the re-appearance of the  
Seven Sisters in the Eastern heavens in September.

The wind all day has lashed the bending trees,  
Tossing and billowing the breast-high oats,  
And hampering the stooker at his task,  
Where, with the craftsman's pride in work well done,  
He builds the prone sheaves into wavering ranks,  
That stretch across the level, new-shorn stubble,  
Fresh-ribboned with the binder's printed tracks;  
But now, when dusk is deepening into dark,  
The poplars rest in still serrated line,  
Each leaf embossed upon the velvet sky  
Whose fading light scarce shows the shadowy stooks.

Above, all stationed at their sentinel posts,  
The vanguard of the starry host appears:  
White Vega in the Zenith hangs her lamp,  
Arcturus reds the west, and, mid between,  
The Northern Crown's pale circlet faintly gleams;  
Great Jupiter lords the south, while in the north  
Capella and The Bear divide the sway.

And see! low on the brooding tree-tops hung,  
In liquid beauty inexpressible,  
The tremulous cluster of the Pleiades;  
A jewelled pendant for the ear of Night,  
Glinting amid her ebon-flowing hair;  
Its silver touched by shade of delicate rose,  
Caught from the dying embers of the west;  
Shedding on lovers' walks 'sweet influences',  
Sung by the Hebrew bard in holy writ,  
And felt by beauty loving sons of men  
In every clime throughout the centuries.

Soon now will follow in their annual courses  
The glorious Constellations of the Snows,  
Sweeping resplendent on in due procession  
Of spangled diagram from furthest Time,  
Quiring for aye in cosmic harmony:  
Regal Aldebaran; The Lesser Dog;  
The Sickel and The Twins of ancient fable;

Orion, poised on triple pivot points,  
 Slow rounding upward in his nightly path;  
 And Sirius, with interchanging flash  
 Of splendour many-hued, outshining all.

### SISTERS AND BROTHERS

Sister and brothers all are we,  
 In bonds of mutual kindness knit;  
 And who would know felicity  
 Must serve the general benefit;

And he, who for his gainful lust  
 Disdains these ties of family,  
 Barters his birthright for a crust  
 And dooms the soul to atrophy.

The social circle of the home  
 Is but the model and presage  
 Of what this old world shall become  
 When love brings in the Golden Age;

Then none shall thrive at others' cost,  
 And all shall seek the common weal;  
 The scourge of War for ever lost,  
 And Poverty - unthinkable!

### INSPIRATION

"Bring me my bow of burning gold!  
 Bring me my arrows of desire!"

A fading coal of the spirit fire  
 Is nursed in a poet's intellect,  
 And blown to the white of his heart's desire,  
 Till creation flames from the soul direct;

And a poem is fused in that crucible's bed,  
 That flows and forms into beauty's mould,  
 And adown the glades of Time is sped  
 A silver shaft from a bow of gold.

PRAIRIE GULLS

A late afternoon  
In August, and lo!  
The brown fallow field  
All shrouded in snow.

Acres of gulls  
On booty full bent,  
Quartering the ground  
With a single intent.

Points of pure silver,  
Granules of light,  
Flash in the sun rays,  
Dazzling the sight.

Thousands on thousands  
Circling they fly,  
Flecking with argent  
Azure of sky.

Showers of blossom,  
Each bloom a star;  
Shed from Elysian  
Orchards afar.

Pictures of sea mews  
Riding the waves,  
Bobbing and curtseying,  
Fancy engraves.

Emblems of angels,  
Winging the breeze,  
Guarding old England,  
Girt by her Seas.

Crystalline beauty,  
Holding no flaw;  
Stirring the watcher  
To wonder and awe.

TO C.P.  
A Sonnet.

When from the realms of light the mind had caught  
And clothed a shining truth in words of flame;  
Within the temple of a sonnet frame  
Enshrined the concept of a gracious thought.  
Then was it good to gain for what was wrought  
A meed of generous praise from one loved name,  
In words which from that distant comrade came  
With sympathetic understanding fraught.

But best of all to know beneath the cope  
Of that abode of fellowship with friends  
There dwells the logic of a larger hope:  
Communion of an all-embracing scope:  
The Universal Love that draws and wends  
Our spirits on and up to noble ends.

'FLAME AND ADVENTURE' BY ANNIE CHARLOTTE DALTON

Once Darwin combed the ages for a clue  
To gauge the factors of Creation's plan,  
Sifting life's vestiges in long review,  
From primal spawn and mollusc to the Man.  
Thy metier, O my Singer, was to span  
The void where men from low to higher grew;  
The fear-compelling, priestly school to ban,  
And on the rock of Love to build anew.

And we who stand allegiant to thy creed,  
Fellow-adventurers on the way He fares,  
Know that our God is Very God indeed,  
And needs His children as they do Him need.  
Led by the pillared flame that onward bears -  
To what far Spirit-bourn? 'Who knows? Who cares?'

# THE RIME OF THE BUCKING BINDER

Some folks their pity waste on tramps  
Or on the organ grinder;  
My sympathy is with the man  
who rides the bucking binder.

He rides, I said, but not for long,  
He's mostly on the stubble,  
A-poking round the pesky thing  
And can't locate the trouble.

She's just a regular standing joke,  
And that the team endorses,  
For though she's hard upon the man  
She's easy on the horses.

He cranks her back; he cranks her forth,  
And shakes her mechanism,  
While now and then she gives a jolt  
That jars his rheumatism.

The crazy things that binder does  
Would fairly make you stagger;  
Loose sheaves in perfect cascades fall,  
A miniature Niagar.

(I can't dig up a staggering rhyme  
With my poetic trowel,  
And so Niagara appears  
Without the final vowel.)

I always speak the truth! at least  
I seldom roll out whackers;  
About a thousand feet of twine  
Is wrapped around the packers.

While lying on his back beneath  
To fix a broken slat he  
Can feel the thistles through his shirt;  
It drives him almost batty.

He's on again, but soon hops off  
To tinker with the knotter;  
Great Heavens! that arm is running loose,  
It must have slipped the cotter.

The gears and bearings on the shafts  
Keep up a constant splutter;  
The pit man crank is hot enough  
To melt that binder's butter.

He hears a grinding sound below  
And glances at the bull-wheel;  
The roller bearings (darn that rhyme!)  
Are coming through the oil-hole.

And when she takes a whim to work  
Some vile, pestiferous weed'll  
Get tangled in the running twine,  
And block the one-eyed needle;

Or Russian thistles, three feet wide,  
Will pile up on the table,  
And make him cuss in all the tongues  
That wrecked the Tower of Babel.

The pointed parts on that machine  
Into his trousers will hook;  
His fingers all are full of sores  
From picking at the bill-hook.

They style her 'she', but why on earth  
They chose the softer gender  
I cannot tell; you'd hardly call  
Her beautiful or tender.

And as for modesty; O boy!  
As I was nearby stooking  
The brazen huzzy stript her gears,  
And cared not who was looking.

Her coy and unresponsive moods  
Would sap the stoutest courage;  
He won't be sorry when he's through  
And puts her in cold storage.

The words he said I won't repeat  
For they might shock the ladies;  
The binder is a noble tool,  
But when she bucks she's - Hades!

Page 22 A LAST FAREWELL TO THE BUCKING BINDER  
Old friend, I thought to find a nook  
For your old age requirement,  
Some quiet corner where you'd rest  
In honourable retirement.

But now there comes from Ottawa  
The call, "Your country needs you,"  
And you must leave your home, old gal,  
To go where duty leads you.

Guards, platform, bearings, bevel gears;  
Bolts, braces, rods and packers;  
All, all dismembered, torn apart,  
And taken to the knackers.

I little thought that on the day  
That you and I were sundered,  
That you would go as metal scrap  
At thirty cents a hunderd.

Perchance some fragment of your frame,  
A ball or roller bearing,  
On some far field may be the end  
Of Hitler or of Goering.

Oft have you borne me round the crop,  
I of your seat the tenant;  
Your reel-slats flashing in the sun,  
Your whip a streaming pennant.

What though at times you'd buck and balk  
And cut capricious capers,  
Yet now those wilful tantrums seem  
But very small pertaters.

Like you I feel quite broken up  
And fallen all to pieces;  
The more I think of what you were  
The more my grief increases;

And so to ease my troubled soul  
I pen this sad reminder:  
You've broken down beyond repair -  
Farewell! Old Bucking Binder!

October, 1942.

A MEADOWLARK ON SIXTH AVENUE  
The Fifth of April

A wilderness of warehouse;  
On the rails the jostling, shunted cars;  
The siren's raucous wail  
Calling to daily work;  
Ashes and withered weeds on vacant lot  
Denuded of the merciful snow;  
All in the bleak and drab of the year.

Look! Listen!  
Now from his private wire  
Above the street-cars' clang,  
A meadow lark (the first)  
Once and again,  
and yet again,  
Shakes out his country-morning song,  
Bringing to ear and eye,  
Famished for beauty,  
Refreshment and delight.

The rippling, rousing notes,  
Wide-scaled, full-throated,  
Waft on the air the breath and bloom of Spring:  
A foretaste, a foretelling:  
The wakened poplar (so fine a lady)  
Draping her lacy limbs  
- A lattice work of silver-shaded green -  
With a diaphanous robe of tremulous verdure,  
Fresh as the birth of Eden;  
Frogs' chorus;  
Crocus cup;  
And all the impassioned chantings of the wood-  
land choir.

Regina, 1943.



CHUBBY  
Age One Year

'A poem is born  
Whose sweetness and light  
No tongue may express  
Nor pen ever write.'

A laddie lies sleeping  
With head on my breast,  
His busv small body  
Relaxed and at rest.

The deep, candid eyes,  
That smiled into mine,  
Are shuttered and fringed  
In delicate line;

And the peace of the sleeper,  
Like sun-showers of rain,  
By intimate channels  
Is borne to my brain.

I breathe in the spirit  
The Blessing once given,  
When He said: "For of such  
Is the kingdom of heaven".

## IMAGINATION

As voyagers of Spain in time of old,  
Venturing the wide Atlantic unafraid,  
Their galleons homeward sailed with wealth in hold;  
Or the lone pioneer with pick and spade  
Delving for precious ore, which, being assayed,  
Yields a residuum of fined gold:  
So Vision with rich freight her ships doth lade,  
And bares the rocks that prisoned gems enfold.

Imagination cleaves the mists that roll  
And balk dull Reason in her quest of light;  
'Tis Mind's antenna, spurning all control,  
And reaching out, instinctive, past dim sight,  
In search of clues to link the human soul  
With the Eternal and the Infinite.

The morn is draped in elfin white,  
As if the Children of the Night  
Had woven filaments of light.

On every leafy, floral bed  
Spinnings of silken weave are spread,  
Where dewdrops trace each shining thread.

And little coverlets of lawn  
Are lightly on the daisies drawn,  
Dew-washed with essence of the dawn.

The lilac bush and scarlet bean  
Are shawled in filmy fleece of sheen,  
That tones to gray their varied green.

A luminous mist above the mead  
Hangs every blade with dewy bead  
And globes the tufted heads of seed.

Evaporous wreaths of delicate pearl  
Thin and more thin to heaven upcurl  
And fade in air as they unfurl.

Translucent silver folds the bloom  
Of carmined rose and yellow broom  
In lustrous lace from fairy loom.

As if the Children of the Night  
Had woven filaments of light  
to drape the earth in elfin white.

## TO MINNIE

On our Birthday  
No formal reminder  
Will furnish my ends,  
But the warmest of phrases  
That poesy lends;  
Not just a good wish  
Your birth-partner sends,  
But the best of good wishes  
To the best of good friends.

THE KINGDOM WITHIN

The air, in trance of stillness wrapped, is  
listening;

With gems broadcast the fields of snow are sown;  
On every twig depending diamonds glistening;  
And all that shining treasure is my own!

For each design of sheer delight and wonder:

The powdered branch; the pearl-blue arch of sky;  
The mild-eyed sun, low hung, that pulses yonder;  
Makes joyous festal cheer to heart and eye.

There is beatitude in contemplation,

With the soul-windows open to the wind,  
When stored memory wakes imagination,  
And sense, light-fused, illuminates the mind.

Now Thought - of life-time thoughts the long  
fruition -

Doth lead the eager Spirit on to know  
The trend and purport of her lofty mission,  
Behind the symboling of this passing show.

And thus the sole authentic Self emerges,  
That has been and shall be, while ages run,  
One with the primal energy that surges  
Through the empyrean from the Central Sun.

So is the man re-born, renewed, resighted  
With vision focus'd to the view sublime;  
His ear attuned to catch the strains united  
That flood the vast and depth of space and  
time.

And through the magic of this happy hour  
 A deeper meaning shines; the strands of light  
 To finer web are spun; a richer dower.  
 Descends to bind the spell that holds my sight:

For all is one; the music of the ages  
 From this rapt scene in echo back is given;  
 One theme the cosmic symphony engages,  
 In Earth's low porch as down the aisles of Heaven.

New Year Morning, 1927.

### TRANSMUTATIONS

From the stagnant morass  
 The waters are drawn  
 And return to the plain,  
 Refreshed and pellucid,  
 To gladden the lawn  
 In the dew and the rain;

And the medley of sounds  
 That arise from the street,  
 Discordant and crude,  
 Transmuted and rhythmic,  
 In harmony meet,  
 To music subdued.

So the turmoil and fret,  
 That encumber our thought  
 As it seeks for the light,  
 Are steadied and stilled  
 And to clarity wrought  
 In the calm of the height;

And our loves of the earth  
 That waver and wane,  
 Yet, aspiring above,  
 Shall freshen anew  
 In the dew and the rain  
 Of the infinite love.

COROLLARY

To the premise that Nature's harmony predicates  
Supreme Mind.

Though bird and leaf and butterfly,  
Shadowed on water, grass and sky,  
Are lovely in the observer's eye,

That beauty does a standard find  
And has its dwelling in the mind  
And consciousness of humankind;

And this perception of design,  
Of harmony in shade and line,  
Unites the human and divine.

Postscript:

But most this unity is shown  
As men perceive and gladly own  
The bond of Love's all-clasping zone;

For darkly seen we dimly trace  
Revealings in the human face  
Of confluence with an Immanent Grace.

And Sunset's majesty and glow  
Do but exemplify and show  
Transcendent splendours yet to know.

'True religion is a relation, accordant  
with reason and knowledge, which man  
establishes with the Infinite that surrounds  
him - a relation that connects his life with  
the Infinite Life and guides his conduct.'

- Leo Tolstoy.

The colours, blended, merge in viewless white;  
They owe their splendours to the central sun,  
Glowing implicit in his blinding light;  
And music weaves her harmonies fine spun  
Of floating strains of that pure unison  
Which fills, unheard of men, the airy height;  
The crimsoned rose, the lark's clear fluting run,  
From these high sources draw their dear delight.

So every exaltation of the soul,  
Whose bloom and song light up the path we plod,  
Speaks of her oneness with the radiant whole,  
And is a premonition of her goal.  
Heaven sings and blossoms from the teeming sod,  
And man, aspiring, shadows forth his God.

#### PRESENCE IN ABSENCE

Gone from the ways of men;  
Passed from our mortal ken;  
Joined with the spirit band;  
Gone to the Fatherland;  
And yet - not gone!

In our sore hearts we prize  
Memories of smiling eyes,  
Of counsels, kindly wise,  
And soul to sympathise.  
Gone! . . . . But not gone!

THE JERVIS BAY

Sunk on November 5th, 1940, while defending  
a merchant fleet under her convoy, when  
Captain Fogarty Fegan R.N.; and many of his  
officers and men went down with the ship.

Hail to the lion hearts!  
Unflinching in the fight,  
When battling to the death  
The raiding warship's might.

Along the Atlantic lane  
A freighter fleet made way,  
Their convoy for the run  
The cruiser Jervis Bay.

Against the setting sun  
Hung veils of hostile smoke;  
Down on the fleeing ranks  
Death and destruction broke.

Then, like a mother bird,  
She signalled to her brood  
To scatter and conceal  
While she the foe withstood.

The odds were hopeless, yet  
She boldly rode the wave;  
To save her floating charge  
Herself she could not save.

In face of certain loss;  
Out-ranged, out-manned, out-sailed,  
The word was: "Man the guns!"  
And never a spirit quailed.

Brave Fegan on the bridge,  
Her ensign at the peak,  
With sudden belch and blaze  
The forward cannon speak.

The gunners at the breech,  
The enginemen below,  
All steadfast at their posts,  
And well they held the foe.

Soon she was sore beset,  
Her boats and bulwarks gone,  
Her quarters all agape -  
And still the ship fought on.

Afire from stem to stern,  
And guns all shot away;  
Her hour of glory won,  
Down went the Jervis Bay.

Hear that brave stoker speak  
The thoughts that in him stir  
When clinging to his plank:  
"God, I was proud of her!"

The Victory, the Revenge,  
And many a ship of fame  
In Britain's honour roll,  
Salute her glorious name.

And Britons yet will speak  
With sorrow and with pride  
Of her brave sailor men  
Who with their captain died.



THE TREE To P.D.

'He shall be like a tree.' Psalms of David.

The Youth in manhood's Spring puts forth his leaves  
And budding blossom, like an orchard tree;  
Through magic growth of green his mind perceives  
The germinal forms of ripened fruit to be.  
Leaf, breeze and sun-shaft, all in mingled glee,  
Dancing to measures gay and debonair,  
Image his joyance in their harmony.  
'Now Love, sweet Love! is urgent on the air,  
And thrills his breast with poignant bliss and  
blissful care.

The Man, with Summer foliage fully spread,  
And sportive shadows chequering the ground,  
Garners his teeming fruit of heart and head;  
Then in a peace of soul, serene, profound,  
His life by Autumn's aureole is crowned;  
A golden radiance that lightens all,  
As on October tree whose root is sound;  
Till every leaf is loosened for the fall,  
And to his spirit comes the mystic final call.

Yet when the seal of death is on his lip  
And laid in dust that crown of his desires,  
As Winter storms with ruthless rigour strip  
The faded coverts of the feathered choirs,  
Nothing is lost: though life with breath expires  
The unseen Essence holds its vital worth;  
'Even in our ashes live their wonted fires';  
Those dead leaves yet shall fructify the earth,  
And men's high thoughts and deeds spring in  
perennial birth.

### THE CHRISTMAS STRINGER

On finding a white, new-born calf in  
the stable early on Christmas morning.

Young wonder of a mother's pride,  
Caressed with tongue and anxious low;  
Crisping the curls that damp your side;  
Warmed from her heart in living flow.

With blundering step and sudden lurch  
And hopeful twinkle of the tail;  
Fumbling her flank in feeble search  
Of that sweet meal for your avail.

Now each by other couching mild  
Portray the theme of Raphael's brush,  
Whose canvas of the Maid and Child  
Brings back the hour of that deep hush,

When in a lowly cattle stall.  
Was born the Babe whose Feast we keep:  
Stilled on her breast his wailing call;  
Lulled in her arms to dreamless sleep.

### TO BRUCE A friend

In the day's dark close  
At the door I stand,  
And a dog's cold nose  
Slides into my hand.

At the end of sleep,  
And the swift night flown,  
Comes a glad wild leap:  
Down Bruce! Down!

DOUBLE SONNET

## THE ROBIN'S SONG AT DAYBREAK

As in a pleasant dreaming doze I lay,  
My waking thoughts dim-conscious of the gleam  
Of rising light that leads the break of day;  
A strain of distant music through my dream  
Flowed sweetly in a clear melodious stream  
Of jubilant song, its modulated play  
Recurrent ever to the master theme  
Of Eden love renewed with springing May.

It was the robin at his morning tryst,  
Calling, insistent, to his nesting mate;  
Hailing with rapturous notes the reddening East  
That shone reflected on his burnished breast.  
He sang as if the world were new create,  
And his the herald's voice from Heaven's gate.

## THE LOST POEM

That night in dream I framed in epic verse  
A drama of 'Man's Life', past and to be.  
The lines flowed of their own volition, free;  
As if some Mentor moved me to rehearse,  
In language elemental, live and terse,  
Man's age-long rise from primal cave and tree  
To the high summit of his destiny,  
Where in the Central Love he shall immerse.

And though the words those dreaming thoughts  
distilled  
Were lost in mists that to the night belong,  
Yet with that vision's light my mind was filled;  
I saw the glory, heard the singing throng,  
As through the dawn-lit chamber broke and thrilled  
The music of that robin's morning song.

THE LAST ROUND  
October 1932

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Gone are the sheaves in tented lines  
And bare the amber stubble shines,  
Save where the straw-pile's drifted cone  
Looms in the twilight, huge and lone.

- On widening zone of new-turned soil  
Across the field the horses toil,  
To add a brodered stripe of brown  
And fold a hem of russet down.

With pointed ear and quickening stride  
The plough-team travels as I ride,  
Their thoughts keen-set on near relief,  
On bedded stall and rustling sheaf.

Below the seat I dimly see  
The turning furrow 'following free';  
An ever breaking wave of loam,  
With curling crest of dusty foam.

The tugs are loosed; the plough at rest;  
The last faint streamers rose the west;  
And pooled upon a cloud's dark bar  
Floats the soft radiance of a star.

The morrow finds the world in white,  
And Autumn vanished in the night;  
All Nature bound in close congeal  
Till Spring's deliverance break the seal.

A FRIENDLY VOICE

7  
Sing while I may!—  
Soon comes the homing.  
My little day  
Draws to its gloaming.  
I hear Death say,  
Live! I am coming!

THE KING SPEAKS  
A Ballad of England

I heard the King of England's voice  
On the day of jubilee;  
And the Voice of England in those tones  
Rang out across the sea.

For there in that farmhouse kitchen,  
On the far Canadian plain,  
Old England's story, Old England's glory,  
Went by in review again.

Through a mist I saw the English cliffs,  
Her fields of waving corn,  
Her market towns and hamlets,  
The farm where I was born.

I walked again the winding lanes  
And the meadows, flower-starred;  
Lost voices reached me as I stood  
By a plot in the old churchyard.

The shining roll of her kings and queens  
Spoke in that royal speech,  
In the pageant of a thousand years,  
Answering each to each.

William of Normandy, Alfred the Great,  
Richard the Lion-heart,  
Harry of Monmouth, Elizabeth,  
Names of England a part.

The land of Wolfe and Wellington,  
Of Frobisher and Drake;  
Cromwell, de Montfort, Nelson, Pitt,  
Shakespeare and William Blake.

Echoes awoke on the aerial waves  
Of many a bygone fight:  
Crecy, Trafalgar, Waterloo,  
The Armada and Abraham's height.

With trumpet sound and escort of guards  
Rides forth the regal pair;  
From Palace gates to Cathedral fane,  
To render Thanksgiving there.

The thunderous roar of the bannered streets,  
The clash of the city bells,  
From Westminster to old Saint Paul's,  
A nation's homage tells.

From over the seas, from below the line,  
The sons of Empire had come;  
No guests were they on that holiday,  
But children back at home.

Te Deum had flooded the mighty Dome,  
The storms of cheering were past,  
And the King withdrawn from his Court apart  
To speak with his own at the last.

Crowning height of the festal day  
For the millions listening in  
Came that message charged with a high intent  
And joy in the ties of kin.

Duty to country, courage serene,  
Were the watchwords ringing clear,  
And unity, rallied around the throne,  
Finding its focus there.

There was pride of state in the kingly words,  
But through and deep and above  
Vibrated the chords of a human heart,  
Swept by his People's love.

Sovereign head of a world-wide realm,  
Heir of a princely line,  
Yet his title rests on that love and trust,  
Given without bound or define.

And that kitchen thrilled to his service call  
In the days that the years will bring,  
While a myriad-shout engirdled the earth:  
Long live our noble King!

REMONSTRANCE

Addressed to a woman novelist,  
in difficulties with a plot.

You ask for a denouement.  
Of your love-tangled plot,  
And yet I think that few 'mong  
Your friends would wish the lot;

But I must not allow you  
To dip your hands in gore,  
Ere in these rhymes I show you  
A plan's been tried before.

Those two redundant lovers  
Deserve a kinder fate,  
Between your new book-covers,  
Before it is too late.

How could you be so cruel  
As knock them on the head,  
Put arsenic in their gruel,  
Or smother them in bed?

Your heroine is unhappy,  
Because, I understand,  
She can't pick out the chappie  
To grace her heart and hand.

When Portia of Venice  
Was in a similar mix  
She did not toss up pennies  
Her wavering choice to fix,

Nor moan in weak falsetto,  
"Won't someone clear the way  
With poison or stiletto  
And speed the wedding day?"

The issue was decided  
Between those suitors bold;  
Three caskets were provided  
Of silver, lead and gold;

In one of these was hidden  
A picture of the bride;  
Bassanio chose the leaden  
And there she was - inside!

So take the tip that's given  
By the Immortal Bard,  
Nor slay your beaux unshriven,  
Their fate will still be hard:

Set each a jig-saw puzzle  
Of hymeneal plan,  
And he the first to solve it  
Shall be the lucky man!

## REUNION

A letter of love from my dearest,  
Through the void of time and the miles,  
And my heart is full of a glory  
That comes to my face in smiles.

That chasm is bridged by a vision  
Of my love in her bounteous charms;  
I can feel the print of her kisses,  
The press of her winding arms.

In that image of warmth and of beauty  
I find the life of my dreams,  
As the flowers of her tender mothering  
Unfold to the morning beams.

And her constant spirit that stays me,  
And grows as the years have grown,  
Binds my soul to the soul of my loved one;  
My Queen - my comrade - my own!



The sun is shining at the full;  
The children's shout comes from the school;  
The wasting snow-drift seeks the pool

In rivulets clear that channels find,  
Each to its tiny gorge confined,  
And flash and sparkle as they wind;

Or glittering on a bank of grass  
The waters hang, nor seem to pass -  
A slope of scintillating glass.

The cattle sense the season's change  
In mimic battles as they range,  
And uncouth gambols rude and strange.

A crow floats by on lazy wing,  
No skill of voice has he to sing,  
But barks his welcome to the spring;

And now they perch in twos and threes  
Vociferous on the naked trees,  
That swing and sway them with the breeze.

And soon on poplar will be seen  
The first faint flush of misty sheen,  
That hints the later, fuller green.

#### SOLILOQUY

A truth may emerge  
From a flat contradiction,  
A legend say more  
Than the history exact;

Though truth may full often  
Be stranger than fiction,  
Yet sometimes a fable  
Is truer than fact.

PINK AND BLUE

Two little maids,  
In the morning cool,  
Appear on the roadway  
Leading to the school.

One dressed in pink,  
The other in blue  
White shady bonnets,  
White stockings, too.

Cheery "Good morning"  
To me as they pass,  
Smiles and a nod  
From each bonnie lass.

Through the near hollow  
Up the steep hill,  
Clear on the crest  
I see them still.

Sun on the wheat-field  
Gleaming green and gold,  
Clouds in new beauties  
Momently unfold;

Hawk just beneath them  
Sailing round on round,  
Jack rabbit scudding  
O'er the dusty ground:

All form a setting  
For those maidens two,  
One dressed in pink,  
The other in blue.

COMING AND GOING

'In the midst of life we are in death!'  
A beautiful colt lies fighting for breath;  
In the demon colic's grip held fast,  
Waiting to claim his prey at the last.

Remedies tried are of no avail,  
All is done and all doth fail;  
The night-long vigil in watching spent  
May not forestall the dire event.

No more to frisk by his mother's side  
As she soberly eyes her darling and pride,  
Nor spurn the sward in galloping chase,  
A picture of vigour and equine grace.

And as the young life ebbs away  
In the cold gray dawn of a winter day,  
From a pen in that stable's inner half  
Comes the strangled cry of a new-born calf.

A TOAST

To Alexander Robertson of Tullymet,  
at a surprise party on his birthday.

Here's a health to friend Sandy,  
We gi'e him our han';  
The pride of the parish,  
The chief of the clan.  
May his family flourish  
And multiply yet;  
Here's to him and his Mistress,  
Long live Tullymet!

THE SWALLOW  
In English May Time.

The darting swallow wets his wing  
And wanton o'er his back does fling  
The waters from the gushing spring.

Along the stream in racing heat,  
Fly bird and shadow, coursing fleet,  
Or dipping, shade and swallow meet.

Elate he crowds his feathery sail  
And stoops to skim the dewy vale,  
Leaving in wake a plashy trail.

The vagrant winds his joyance serve  
In buoying many a sportive curve,  
Breath-taking dive and sidelong swerve;

And with the full and stretch of life,  
Breasting the gale in zestful strife,  
His every glide and glance is rife;

Now at the peak of ecstasy,  
On fluttering pinion balanced free,  
He hovers momentarily;

Then from the maze his wheeling weaves  
In arrowy flight a passage cleaves  
To his one love beneath the eaves.

A FORTUNE                      For a Young School Marm

O gentle lady, pray be calm,  
The coin with which you've crost my palm  
Ensures my very best attention;  
If I aright your star can see  
A great-grandmother you will be,  
And stout beyond all comprehension.

THE BATTLE OF BRYN MAWR

No tale of ancient tourney this,  
But just a game of ball,  
Between the men of Eddy School  
And the men of Fruedenthal.

First one and the other take the lead  
In the final round that day,  
And they fight it out to a six-all draw  
At the closing of the play.

And twice an extra innings,  
And twice the count is tied;  
First two, then three, in the scorer's book  
Are added to either side.

And they face again as the sun goes down,  
The umpire cries "Play ball!"  
The Eddy team are at the bat,  
In the field are Fruedenthal.

The batters score a winning run  
'Gainst fielding clean and tight,  
And the pitcher throwing his darkest ball  
In the fading evening light.

And now 'tis the turn of Fruedenthal.  
In the dying of the day;  
The rooter's cries are taut and tense  
As they urge them to the fray.

The first two up are fanned away,  
Two down and never a hit,  
For that Eddy pitcher hurls the ball  
Like a demon from the pit.

Then his rival pitcher grasps a bat,  
 All day he has held the mound;  
 He bends an eye on the waiting field  
 As he rubs his hands on the ground.

A left-field grounder strips the grass  
 And lands him safe on first,  
 Where he strains in the slips as the next man swings  
 As if the leash would burst.

One strike, he steals the second;  
 Two strikes, he slides to third;  
 And barely there, but he holds the bag  
 At the call of the umpire's word.

Two down - two strikes - a man on third -  
 And a single run to tie;  
 At the crack of bat on ball he knows  
 'Tis now to do or die;

And fleet he speeds by the frantic fans,  
 But just a stride too late;  
 A flying ball - a flurry of dust -  
 And they get him at the plate!

Now three high cheers for the winners  
 And three for the losers given,  
 But none may say 'tis a vanquished side  
 With a score of twelve to eleven.

And this is the tale of the Bryn Mawr Sports  
 And that glorious game of ball,  
 When the men of Eddy bore the prize  
 From the men of Fruedenthal.

TO MARJORIE  
On her Seventeenth Birthday.

Who is the lass with red-brown mane?  
One passing scarce would think her plain,  
But looking once might look again  
At Marjorie.

Who likes on Maggie's back to race  
Across the fields in headlong chase,  
The brown locks bobbing round her face?  
Young Marjorie.

Who, reading humorous episode,  
Would gurgle, laugh and half explode,  
Until the salt tears fairly flowed?  
Blithe Marjorie.

Who is it sometimes with me spars  
And makes me see the daytime stars,  
Venus and Jupiter and Mars?  
Gay Marjorie.

And when we wage our civil wars  
Who gives my nose such sudden jars  
That time alone may heal the scars?  
Sprite Marjorie.

Who carries on her roguish face  
The limnings of the Duddridge race,  
And something of her Mother's grace?  
Our Marjorie.

Who is it loves her Daddy true,  
For whom he has a fancy, too,  
And on her lays his blessing due?  
My marjorie.

## SILVER WEDDING

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When I upon thy bosom lean  
Life's vexing cares are all forgot;  
No boding shadow falls between  
To dim the lustre of my lot.

There strains of harmony divine  
Break on the inner listening sense,  
The while I pay at that fair shrine  
The homage of a faith intense;

And as the flooding ocean tides  
Flow in to fill some inland cove,  
So into my rapt spirit glides  
An influx of the Sea of Love.

The fruited years together spent!  
Since, in that grove the Thames beside,  
I knew the longed-for, dear assent  
Thy speaking eyes refused to hide;

And still my soul exults, as when  
We claspt on that enchanted e'en,  
And all the transport comes again  
When I upon thy bosom lean.

## THE ORDINATION

Within his father's church the student stands,  
Eager yet diffident, with steadfast heart  
Ready to don the ministerial bands;  
In leadership of love to bear his part.

An answering thrill exalts the assembled throng  
And kindles all the-peopled, listening aisles;  
Expressed in rising strains of sacred song  
And faces lit with heaven-reflecting smiles.

The charge is given, vows made with resolute face;  
Fraternal hand-clasp ratifies the rite.  
Emotion swells when with a strong embrace  
Father and son in other bonds unite.



In British hearts how sure thy place!  
Bosom companion of the race;  
Could we but meet thee face to face  
    We'd greet thee fine,  
And pledge thee in a cup of grace  
    For Auld Lang Syne.

Thy Art no trace of art doth show;  
Through the clear line the breezes blow;  
We hear sweet Afton's gentle flow,  
    The wildbirds' chorus;  
Fierce winter storms of driving snow  
    Fly whirling o'er us.

What vigorous sense informs thy style!  
In range of mood how versatile!  
Sly, mirthful sallies cheat, a smile  
    Of jovial cheer,  
Or parted love's laments beguile  
    A tribute tear.

The wounded hare thy pity woke,  
Warmly indignant at the stroke  
Of ruthless hunter, run amok  
    'Mong dumb creation;  
The forlorn mouse's woes bespoke  
    Commiseration.

Thy verse extolled in lofty flights  
The Cotter's simple, solemn rites,  
But rained her gibes and scornful slights  
    On bigot billies,  
And scourged Religion's parasites,  
    Her Holy Willies.

Thou sang'st of Wallace and The Bruce,  
Who brooked no parley, peace nor truce  
While in their land the foe was loose;  
    Their ardours burn  
In that great song thou did'st produce  
    Of Bannockburn.

And we that speak the English tongue,  
 Of common British lineage sprung,  
 Who boast the liberties hard-wrung  
 By our brave sires,  
 Are kindled, by thy harp deep-strung,  
 To patriot fires.

Thou had'st the wish for honest fame,  
 And nations now thy gifts acclaim;  
 Bright flashes of thy tuneful flame  
 Yet fire our hearts,  
 While Earth repeats thy deathless name  
 In all her parts.

But more than place on Honour's scroll:  
 The movings of thy generous soul,  
 That reach us through the years that roll  
 Across the span,  
 Compel our deep affection's toll:  
 We love the Man!

#### TO A MEADOWLARK

One song recurring,  
 One stanza clear;  
 Is it 'Here I am'  
 Or 'What a dear'?

Just three love notes  
 From a mellow throat;  
 No neighbour lark  
 Has so full a note;  
 There all through May,  
 And now in June,  
 Ring the same glad words  
 To the same gay tune.

Yes, brother singer,  
 I hear, I hear,  
 With your 'Here I am!'  
 And 'What a dear!'

POETIC AFFINITY  
To C.P.

Friend of my heart  
As I of thine;  
Dear in thy thought  
As thou in mine;  
Though hand ne'er closed on hand,  
Nor eyes e'er met and mingled,  
Shine with shine.

Yet thou and I  
Together rove  
The stratosphere  
Of sovran love;  
All floored with white fleece-cloud;  
The blue, blue heavens around us  
And above.

In that high realm,  
Serene and fair,  
We mount and glide  
On wings of air,  
And see the poet band  
Bow low to Beauty's Queen,  
Whose throne is there;

And with those names  
Of far repute,  
Who tune their songs  
To harp and lute,  
Is ranged a mighty choir  
Of votaries whose praise  
On earth was mute;

And there is borne  
Along the wind  
Love's music, deep  
And unconfined;  
And they and we are one;  
Joined in that melody  
Of married mind.

## TO A WILD STRAWBERRY

Wee luscious firstling of the prairie fruits,  
Sprinkling with scarlet drops the roadside bank,  
Or hidden in thy flower-strewn bed of green.

Oft have I breathed awhile the smoking team  
About the purlieus of a grassy slough,  
To ransack all thy foliage for a feast;  
And oft at supper's hour the children's glean,  
Saucered with cream, supplied a royal dish  
(Ringing in replica the sunset west)  
Of pleasant pungency and sharpened sweetness,  
Searching the palate to its last recess  
And lingering on the tongue. As if Dame Nature  
Had from her secret store distilled an essence,  
Condensing in one globule all the best  
And rarest in her wondrous alchemy  
Of colour, fragrance and delicious flavour,  
Rousing and charming in a single spell  
The triple sense of taste and sight and smell.

ROBERT BRIDGES  
Obit. Easter, 1930.

Say not that he sleeps;  
His soul has awaked to be loved.  
In the Land of his singing,  
While Easter is ringing,  
The spirit, earth-shackles removed,  
Her festival keeps.

The testament sworn  
To Beauty in fealty and love  
Engrossed on his pages  
Shall stand through the ages;  
The love that he goeth to prove  
In beauty of morn.

The England he praised,  
More dear to her sons for his meed,  
Wit' grasses shall cover  
The dust of her lover;  
His lore in the hearts of her breed  
Indelibly phrased.

Right onward he prest  
In the relay of song through the years  
The staff that he bore  
From the runners of yore  
He handeth away to his peers,  
And gladly doth rest.

JIMMY

Laid to rest June 8th, 1932.

Aged 13 years.

I see him in a picture,  
Their gallant, breezy boy,  
While all my thoughts remember  
The parents' vanished joy:

His horse is at the tie-post,  
A rap upon the door,  
And then the cheery greeting  
That comes again no more.

But when I shape the message  
That sympathy would say,  
The halting words of comfort  
Like water slip away.

Unbidden memories misten  
And blur that pictured view;  
Those words are still unspoken,  
For, truth, I need them too!

CALLING CANADA

Canada! Open our eyes  
To this high-born heritage:  
Heirs of a land where a man may stand  
And dream of a golden age.

Canada! Open our hearts;  
Make us one family.  
This be our vaunt: Ignorance and Want  
Never again to be.

Canada! Breed us men  
To guide thy destiny.  
Colour nor Creed; in name and in deed  
A land of liberty.

Canada! Hasten the day  
When national flags are furled.  
Our crowning boast from coast to coast:  
Citizens of the World.

## THE ENGLISH VIOLET

The rose is Beauty's queen,  
The honeysuckle - sweet,  
The daisy shining in the grass  
Is modesty complete;

But the dearest flower that breathes,  
Where all these charms are met  
Of beauty, fragrance, lowliness,  
Is the English Violet.

In budded hedge deep-hid,  
Upreared on slender stem;  
Unseen, thy presence steeps the air;  
Welcome, thou lovely gem!

Basking on sunny bank  
In shoals of living blue,  
Recalling childhood's halcyon hours  
When fairy tales were true.

Back to old England now  
Our thoughts, like swallows, wing;  
England, my Mother's home and thine,  
Thou essence of the Spring!

Heaven springs from earth in thee,  
Nor shines in thee alone;  
Heaven dwells in every breathing thing,  
For earth and heaven are one.

TO HENRY CONDIE      The Wascana Poet.  
Wascana's waves are glazed and still,  
Her flower-beds counterpaned with snow;  
The embryo germs of bud and leaf  
In hibernation sleep below.

Yet now our Henry's living verse,  
All redolent of blossom-time,  
Irradiates the wintry mark  
With glory of the summer's prime.

## SONG BEFORE LANDFALL

I saw her in a garden;  
 Eighteen, and fancy-free;  
 The morning roses queening,  
 And the hour came to me.

Ah! The dream and despair in wooing  
 That lass of the Norfolk lea,  
 And the lyric pride of winning  
 My beautiful bride to be.

Hand in hand we have voyaged  
 Over smooth and troubled sea;  
 Days of all-hallow gladness,  
 Moments of ecstasy.

Yet ever, though nearing landfall,  
 That vision abides with me:  
 The girl and the English garden,  
 Eighteen and fancy-free.

1897-1947

## THE QUESTION

Topping a rise with labouring load of grain  
 The prairie village comes in sudden view:  
 School, churches, elevators, starting train  
 With rising smoke-plumes merging in the blue.  
 Where Indian reared his tent and bison slew,  
 Or decked in paint and feather scoured the plain,  
 Within a generation formed and grew  
 This monument to human will and brain.  
 And here is fixed, in all we see and are,  
 The manual sign of mightiest Authorship:  
 From this high knoll the green bluffs, near and  
 far,  
 In endless rolling sequence mount and dip.  
 What guides the lightning's bolt and spins the  
 star?  
 Unfolds the rose and curves the lily's lip?

Earl Grey, Sask.



On receiving a picture of the home of  
my childhood in England:  
The house to which long years ago  
Our father brought his bride,  
And where with all their children round  
The silver knot was tied.

And still the ivy hides the wall,  
The laurels deck the lawn,  
And in the leafage on the porch  
Blithe sparrows chirp at dawn.  
Behind the door I see the rooms,  
The hallway and the stair,  
And where the old piano stood  
And where the chiffoniere.

Green trees beyond the picture's verge  
Down on the barton look:  
The noble elms that stand on guard,  
The pear tree by the brook.  
Old cottages along the stream  
Lie single or in groups,  
With scented stocks and hollyhocks  
Beside the doorway stoops;

And stretched across the copsy vale  
That Quantock's rampart shields  
A net of lane and hedgerow binds  
The crooked, steepy fields.  
I see the house where Mary Stone  
Displayed her merchandise:  
Bread, soda, salt and sugary dumps  
The slender stock comprise;

And well I mind the day and hour  
When, by her fruit trees come,  
Temptation took me in the flank -  
I pocketed a plum!  
And how the dame observed the theft,  
Yet for my pardon pled;  
If he had only asked for one  
It had been his, she said:

That other cottage (mid of three)  
 Where week by week we met,  
 And Israel Sminney led the prayer  
 In broadest Zummeret;  
 And some old tune (dear knows how old)  
 Was sung with voice and soul,  
 The lines repeated o'er and o'er  
 To fit the anthem's roll.

Where David's Harp's glad strains arose  
 In measured time and slow,  
 Or Pisgah's 'Land of pure delight',  
 Or massive 'Guide me, O!'  
 They hear the preacher from the book  
 Expound the sacred lore,  
 While song of bird and scent of flower  
 Steal through the open door;

And bairns around the ingle nook  
 Fast by the chimney side,  
 Their whispered merriment suppress  
 At parents' frowning chide;  
 Then in some homely dish of delf,  
 With snowy cloth o'erlaid,  
 The coppery alms are gathered up  
 Before the Blessing said.

What bawling, barking din arose  
 That morn the sheep we washed;  
 With streaming back and plaintive bleat  
 Each up the backway splashed,  
 And next the shearing day came round  
 With muster of the clan;  
 When the last fleece was clipt and tied  
 The revelry began:

Page 58 A tub of water stood at the door  
With fragrant herbs in-dipt,  
Wherein the maids for devilment  
A stinging nettle slipt;  
And many a roguish smile was seen  
When some unwary wight  
His hands withdrew with face of rue,  
To assuage the sudden bite.

Now to the feast mid clash of steel  
They fall with mighty zest;  
Then was the Master in his prime  
With merry tale and jest;  
Huge plates of beef and puddings round  
The cider mugs outflank;  
Till, belts enlarged and glasses charged,  
They Host and Hostess thank:

"Yur's to the vlock en all the stock,  
Maister en Missus too;  
En pray God zave ee!" was the toast  
Pledged all in order due.  
But now 'tis time to quit my rhyme,  
For I can hear full well  
The hooter from the Brendon mines  
And Blommart's dinner bell.

And yet I should of Christmas tell,  
The day of all the year,  
When aunts and cousins gathered round  
The board of festal cheer.  
In roasted goose with apple sauce,  
Mince pies and clotted cream,  
Us younkers saw the bodied shape  
Of many a waking dream.

Care thrown aside, and circled wide  
About the Yule fire's glow;  
What games we played and forfeits paid  
Beneath the mistletoe!  
Constricted throat and moistening eye  
Emotion's swell betrays,  
At memory of those records dear  
Of happy childhood days.

Scanning the headlines idly  
I saw 'Bliss Carman dead',  
And all the page was darkened,  
The trivial news unread.

No more the lyric solo  
From that clear, sprightly soul;  
His music now is blended  
In the harmonious Whole.

Companion of the robin,  
Hail-fellow to the lark,  
Conversant with the fairies  
That foot the shaded park.

Mourn him, ye feathered songsters,  
Whose lays inspired his own;  
Tell to the streams and woodlands  
The loss that we bemoan.

Lament, ye pine and cypress;  
Bend low your heads, ye flowers;  
And sigh, ye winds, a requiem  
Through the dim forest bowers.

No need of lettered tablet  
His virtues to rehearse;  
He graved a true memorial  
Deep in his gift of verse.

Too soon for compensation  
In thought of that bequest;  
Too near the living presence  
For grief to be expressed.

The dark ship in the offing  
Has on her voyage gone,  
And borne the enfranchised spirit  
To the Isles of the Unknown.

O life, that comes we know not whence,  
And goes we know not where;  
A breath that clouds awhile the glass  
Of Time, and then does fade and pass  
Before we are aware.

The oak that braves a thousand storms;  
The insect of a day;  
And man and bird and painted flower;  
Are fated from the natal hour  
To wastage and decay.

Yet life that lapses lives again  
In varied form and sphere:  
The yellow leaves that lie forlorn  
To other use again are born,  
In later green appear.

The grassy sod we plough is but  
The grass of yester-years;  
Rich interest on nature's hoard,  
From dateless time compressed and stored,  
The June-green prairie bears;

And through the realm of sentient things,  
In great Creation's plan,  
Form into changing form resolves,  
And type to higher type evolves  
The destiny of man.

As when we see a garment hung  
Oft worn by someone dear,  
That friend, though far, comes to us straight;  
His smile, his trick of speech and gait,  
Shown in that coat of wear;

Even so this body that I feed  
And lay at night to rest  
Is but the cloak that covers me;  
The man himself you never see,  
Except as he is dressed.

And man that dies is not extinct,  
 But serves the future age:  
 Lincoln and Shelley live in us,  
 Their deeds and visions glorious  
 Are still our heritage.

The soul that gives and dreams and strives  
 For all humanity  
 Shall flower when these clouts are cast,  
 And find in kindred lives, at last,  
 Its immortality.

### A CREED

Has man no spring of happiness,  
 Or must he wait for death's release?  
 Has he no power himself to bless,  
 Nor hope of Life ere life shall cease?

The time for happiness is now;  
 The place for happiness is here;  
 And would you know the secret how? -  
 Make others' happiness your care.

For none can wholly happy be  
 Whilst one in misery heaves a sigh;  
 On waves of human sympathy  
 The answering radio-currents fly.

This simple creed I here profess,  
 Despite of theologic din:  
 The only good is Happiness,  
 And Selfishness the single sin.

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SECTION II  
SOME WILD OATS



SMEEDS CHRISTMAS PARTY

The boss in celebrating mood  
Put on a Christmas Party,  
To entertain the staff and friends,  
And all was free and hearty.

The management was there in force,  
McElroys by the dozen;  
The grand old man to head the clan,  
Children and wives and cousins.

The eats were good, likewise the drinks,  
Plenty for all to sample,  
And I must say the ladies set  
A very fine example;

Wearing their most alluring smiles  
And smartest bib and tucker;  
It made them laugh to see Glen Drake  
licking an all-day sucker.

Bert Mann was there with all his own  
Peculiar style of beauty;  
Each time that beer-tray came around  
He nobly did his duty.

Joe Levis, fine old patriarch,  
Was ready for the occasion,  
While little Joe he was not slow  
And needed no persuasion.

Hughie was sober as a judge,  
Maybe a trifle perky,  
But there was quite a hue and cry  
When someone stole his turkey.

Its legs were tied, the feathers gone,  
And not a thing inside it;  
The bird was found in Kennedy's car  
With Neil parked down beside it.

(Next day the case was tried in Court  
Of Juvenile Delinquent;  
The Judge had tried a case of beer -  
And all his power to think went.)

The talk was great - between the drinks  
On which the attack was frontal -  
George fairly took the floor -  
In posture horizontal!

Allan kept open eye to see  
That no one was neglected,  
While Jack McLeod went through the crowd -  
Until he was detected.

Ken Jones he surely pulled his weight  
Without a sign of reeling,  
While Bud was doubtful in his mind  
Which was the floor and ceiling.

Our host and hostess prized the gift  
The boys had been and bought 'm;  
Jack made the speech, it was a peach,  
That no one could have taught 'm.

Goodwill and fun lit every face  
With feelings free and hearty,  
And may we all be there again  
At next year's Christmas Party.

Christmas, 1943.

### THE HOAX

It can be done, I learned today,  
Of a wise man to make a fool,  
But no one ever found the way  
To make a wise man of a fool.

TO OUR LOCAL SPRING POET

Here in our midst we have a poet,  
A local Burns, and didn't know it;  
A really-truly, rustic bard,  
Who spins out verses by the yard;  
Running 'on high', a mile a minute,  
Walt Mason simply isn't in it.

Observe the lofty theme he chooses,  
This favoured darling of the Muses;  
The white, the pure, the driven snow,  
The fairest emblem that we know,  
Symbol of all that's high and holy  
Here in this 'vale of melancholy'.

Let others sing of lady's love,  
Of honeyed lips and turtle dove,  
Of aery-faery, fond fantasms,  
Eternal vows and love-sick spasms,  
Until their high, ecstatic lyrics  
Rise in a paean of wild hysterics.

But lest his subject leave us cold  
And numbing frost our senses hold,  
He shows in language elegantal  
The green beneath Earth's snowy mantle,  
And paints in colours warm and glowing  
The bursting buds and zephyrs blowing.

Longlaketon's bounds will not confine  
The magic of his peerless line,  
But Strasbourg, Southey and Markinch  
Shall be his debtors (that's a cinch),  
And echo still shall reach as far as  
The burghs of Lipton and Balcarres.

The Earl Grey, Sask. Review  
1920.

THE SONG OF THE STINKWEED  
With abject apologies to the 'Dear Little Shamrock'

There's an obnoxious weed that spreads all about;  
Sure the devil himself must have sown it,  
And imported the seed, fully tested for drought,  
From his hell where he'd previously grown it.

It springs from the wheat -  
From the oat -  
And the rye-land,  
And they call it the stinkwood,  
The worst weed on dry-land.

The mean little stinkweed,  
The rank little stinkweed;  
The mean little,  
Rank little,  
Dam little stinkweed!

# FORTUNES For a Bachelor

According to this present bard,  
Who spins out fortunes by the yard,  
Your fate is most extremely hard:

Just when you think the girl you've hooked  
You'll find your goose is badly cooked;  
She'll tell you she's already booked.

## For a Lady

Dear lady, why request me  
Your fortune to explain?  
Just glance within your mirror,  
You'll find it there - quite plain.

TRIPE

To a lost leader on his returning  
to Old Party allegiance.

There was a man who hated tripe  
As if it were the devil;  
The taste and smell and sight and sound  
To him were rank and evil.

Against its use he warned his friends  
And made profound researches  
To prove the stuff should be tabu,  
And aired his views in churches.

An Anti-Tripe Society  
Was formed beneath his aegis,  
And propaganda for the cause  
His tongue and pen engages.

But now, withouten salt or shame,  
He eats it good and hearty;  
As he before was for the State  
So now he's for the Party.

For look, says he, your Farmer spread  
Is pretty meagre carving,  
And if I don't get in on this  
The next thing I'll be starving.

So does the dog his vomit chew,  
The sow resume her wallow,  
And my small ditty goes to show  
The things a man may swallow.

## SAUCE FOR THE GANDER

He was off to his Lodge with a jaunty step,  
 A bachelor interlude earning.  
 She charged him once, she charged him twice;  
 And she spoke with a strict and a wifely voice:  
 O be not late in returning.

He promised her once, he promised her twice,  
 To give her charging observance;  
 But upon her brow came a shade of doubt,  
 And the faintest possible hint of a pout  
 On those lips of Cupid's curvance.

The midnight chimes were telling the hour  
 As he cautiously turned the handle;  
 Removing his shoes at the outer door,  
 And pacing softly across the floor  
 By the light of a single candle.

He sat him down for a final pipe,  
 The smoke his reveries wreathing;  
 All was silent as King Tut's tomb;  
 No sound was heard from that inner room,  
 No croon of disrupted breathing.

But a rift was made in that web of dreams,  
 His musings abruptly ended,  
 When there fell on his ear from the outer hall  
 The lift of a latch and a light footfall,  
 And a spell on his sight descended;

For a sylph-like form was hazily seen  
 By the candle's dim discerning;  
 And he seemed to be seeing things - until  
 He saw 'twas his wife who stood on the sill,  
 From a Movie Show returning!

## MORAL:

So, benedicts, pause whenever you feel  
 A dangerous urge to philander,  
 Or when you get home to the little caboose  
 You may find that what is sauce for the goose  
 Is also sauce for the gander.

O. CHANT. PROP.

(The public bars were closed in the 1914-1918 War

Listen to my roundelay;  
Busy reader, prithee stop,  
While I sing of Hotel Grey,  
O. Chant, Prop.

Pioneers thy timbers raised,  
Solid base to turret top;  
Let their energies be praised,  
O. Chant, Prop.

Lately fallen from high estate,  
Sacred bar a butcher shop;  
Now restored and up to date,  
O. Chant, Prop.

There you'll find soft drinks enough,  
Coca-cola, ginger pop,  
But of any sterner stuff  
Not - a - drop.

Ye who daily throng to dine  
(Sausage, steak or juicy chop)  
Raise your voices now with mine,  
O. Chant, Prop.

Bagmen, travellers off the train,  
Farmers hauling in the crop;  
All and sundry, swell the strain,  
O. Chant, Prop.

'Reg Ister'

From the Earl Grey, Sask. Review.

THE MUSICIAN'S SERENADE TO HIS INAMORATA

If I were a violinist  
And you were a violin,  
I would lay your head on my shoulder  
And caress you against my chin.

If I were a clarinetist  
And you were a clarinet,  
I would whisper sweet nothings, Carissa,  
And know that our lips had met.

If I were a tuba player  
And you were the tuba deep,  
Encircled around my neck, dear,  
You should 'ompah' me off to sleep.

If I were a bold bassoonist.  
And you the bonny bassoon,  
We would join our heads in a huddle  
And together gurgle a tune.

If I were a Highland piper  
And you were the bagpipes fine,  
I would press you within my arm, sweet,  
And feast on your voice divine.

---

The Signorina's reply:

If I were an army drummer  
And you were the big, big drum,  
I would bang your sides for dear life, Sir,  
And beat you till kingdom come!



TO GEORGE CARPENTER

Of Tullymet, Sask.

An encore verse to 'Simon the Cellarer'.

George Carpenter's birthday has brought us all here

Intent on a song and a spree;

We wish him all happiness, health and good cheer;

For a jolly good sport is he.

He will sing you a song and tell you a tale,

And never say no to a glass of good ale;

And he's a true Britisher; that we all know,

From the top of his head to the tip of his toe.

But Ho! Ho! Ho!

His wife doth know

More things about George than she'll tell, I trow!

1915.

#### A CASUALTY

"All's fair in love and war," they say,

But faithless wife and painful scar

Bring home to him on Victory Day

That all's not fair in love and war.

TO MY LADY. INQUISITOR

Who has a most uncanny knack,  
Clear-marked by her blue pencil's track,  
Of seeing what my verses lack?

Miss Jessiman.

When I to her my poems pack  
Who makes me see my white is black,  
And sends me on the other tack?

Miss Jessiman.

When my spent Pegasus (poor hack)  
Shows any signs of growing slack  
Who pounds his hide with sounding thwack?

Miss Jessiman.

In emulating Milton (Jack)  
Fool's paradise is lost, alack,  
When she proclaims it idle clack:

Miss Jessiman.

And when, sharp-set, I'd snatch a snack  
From some contiguous sandwich stack,  
Who stays my hand, "You've had your whack"?

Miss Jessiman.

Who whelms my fame in ruin-wrack  
By throwing at my honour-plaque  
Some well aimed piece of bric-a-brac?

Miss Jessiman.

Who is it lays me on my back  
And tortures me with screw and rack,  
Till joint and muscle stretch and crack?

Miss Jessiman.

And yet - and yet - as I look back--  
Who kept my feet upon the track,  
In kindness that could never lack?

Miss Jessiman